

## **Public Alerts**

### **317.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for alerting the public to important information and soliciting public aid when appropriate.

### **317.2 POLICY**

Public alerts may be employed using the Emergency Alert System (EAS), local radio, television and press organizations and other groups to notify the public of incidents, or enlist the aid of the public, when the exchange of information may enhance the safety of the community. Various types of alerts may be available based upon each situation and the alert system's individual criteria.

### **317.3 RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **317.3.1 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

Employees of the California Department of State Hospitals (DSH) should notify their supervisor, Watch Commander as soon as practicable upon learning of a situation where public notification, a warning or enlisting the help of the media and public could assist in locating a missing person, apprehending a dangerous person or gathering information.

#### **317.3.2 HOSPITAL POLICE CHIEF RESPONSIBILITIES**

A supervisor apprised of the need for a public alert is responsible to make the appropriate notifications based upon the circumstances of each situation. The supervisor shall promptly notify the Hospital Police Chief, who will make the appropriate notification through the chain of command to DSH, Sacramento. The Hospital Police Chief or designee is responsible for the following:

- (a) Updating alerts

- (b) Canceling alerts
- (c) Ensuring all appropriate reports are completed
- (d) Preparing an after-action evaluation of the investigation

#### **317.4 AMBER ALERTS**

The AMBER Alert™ Program is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies, broadcasters, transportation agencies and the wireless industry, to activate urgent bulletins in child abduction cases.

##### **317.4.1 CRITERIA FOR AMBER ALERT**

The following conditions must be met before activating an AMBER Alert:

- (a) A child has been abducted or taken by anyone, including but not limited to a custodial parent or guardian.
- (b) The victim is 17 years of age or younger, or has a proven mental or physical disability.
- (c) The victim is in imminent danger of serious injury or death.
- (d) There is information available that, if provided to the public, could assist in the child's safe recovery. (Gov. Code, § 8594, subd. (a).)

317.4.2 PROCEDURE FOR AMBER ALERT

- (a) An initial press release is prepared that includes all available information that might aid in locating the child:
  - 1. The child's identity, age and description
  - 2. Photograph if available
  - 3. The suspect's identity, age and description, if known
  - 4. Pertinent vehicle description
  - 5. Detail regarding location of incident, direction of travel, potential destinations, if known
  - 6. Name and telephone number of the Public Information Officer or other authorized individual to handle media liaison
  - 7. A telephone number for the public to call with leads or information
- (b) The local California Highway Patrol (CHP) communications center should be contacted to initiate a multi-regional or statewide EAS broadcast, following any policies and procedures developed by CHP. (Gov. Code, § 8594.)
- (c) Information regarding the missing person should be entered into the California Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (CLETS.)
- (d) Information regarding the missing person should be entered into the California Department of Justice Missing and Unidentified Persons System (MUPS)/National Crime Information Center (NCIC.)
- (e) The following resources should be considered as circumstances dictate:
  - 1. The local Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) office
  - 2. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

### **317.5 BLUE ALERTS**

Blue Alerts may be issued when an officer is killed, injured or assaulted and the suspect may pose a threat to the public or other law enforcement personnel.

#### **317.5.1 CRITERIA FOR BLUE ALERTS**

All of the following conditions must be met before activating a Blue Alert:

- (a) A law enforcement officer has been killed, suffered serious bodily injury or has been assaulted with a deadly weapon, and the suspect has fled the scene of the offense.
- (b) The investigating law enforcement agency has determined that the suspect poses an imminent threat to the public or other law enforcement personnel.
- (c) A detailed description of the suspect's vehicle or license plate is available for broadcast.
- (d) Public dissemination of available information may help avert further harm or accelerate apprehension of the suspect. (Gov. Code § 8594.5.)

**317.5.2 PROCEDURE FOR BLUE ALERT**

The supervisor in charge should ensure the following:

- (a) An initial press release is prepared that includes all available information that might aid in locating the suspect:
  - 1. The license number and/or any other available description or photograph of the vehicle
  - 2. Photograph, description and/or identification of the suspect
  - 3. The suspect's identity, age and description, if known
  - 4. Detail regarding location of incident, direction of travel, potential destinations, if known
  - 5. Name and telephone number of the Public Information Officer or other authorized individual to handle media liaison
  - 6. A telephone number for the public to call with leads or information
- (b) The local CHP communications center is contacted to initiate a multi-regional or statewide EAS broadcast.
- (c) The following resources should be considered as circumstances dictate:
  - 1. Entry into the California Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (CLETS)
  - 2. The FBI local office

**317.6 SILVER ALERTS**

Silver Alerts® is an emergency notification system for people who are 65 years of age or older, developmentally disabled or cognitively impaired and have been reported missing (Gov. Code § 8594.10).

#### 317.6.1 CRITERIA FOR SILVER ALERTS

All of the following conditions must be met before activating a Silver Alert (Gov. Code § 8594.10):

- (a) The missing person is 65 years of age or older, developmentally disabled or cognitively impaired.
- (b) DSH has utilized all available local resources.
- (c) The investigating officer or supervisor has determined that the person is missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances.
- (d) The investigating officer or supervisor believes that the person is in danger because of age, health, mental or physical disability, environment or weather conditions, that the person is in the company of a potentially dangerous person, or that there are other factors indicating that the person may be in peril.
- (e) There is information available that, if disseminated to the public, could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.

#### 317.6.2 PROCEDURE FOR SILVER ALERT

Requests for a Silver Alert shall be made through the California Highway Patrol (Gov. Code § 8594.10).

### **317.7 YELLOW ALERTS**

Yellow Alerts are notifications related to hit-and-run incidents resulting in the death or injury (Veh. Code § 20001; Gov. Code § 8594.15).

#### 317.7.1 CRITERIA FOR YELLOW ALERTS

All of the following conditions must be met before requesting the activation of a Yellow Alert (Gov. Code § 8594.15):

- (a) A person has been killed or has suffered serious bodily injury due to a hit-and-run.
- (b) It is likely the suspect may be seen on a state highway.
- (c) There is additional information concerning the suspect's vehicle, including, but not limited to any of the following:
  - 1. The suspect or the suspect's vehicle can be particularly described (e.g., a complete or partial license plate number)
  - 2. Unique vehicle characteristics (e.g., make, model and color of suspect's vehicle)
  - 3. The identity of the suspect
- (d) Public assistance can mitigate danger to the public or quicken the apprehension of the suspect.

#### 317.7.2 PROCEDURE FOR YELLOW ALERT

Requests for a Yellow Alert shall be made through the California Highway Patrol (Gov. Code § 8594.15).

### **317.8 ADDITIONAL ALERTS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY EMERGENCIES**

Additional public safety emergency alerts may be authorized that utilize wireless emergency alert system (WEA) and emergency alert system (EAS) equipment for alerting and warning the public to protect lives and save property (Gov. Code § 8593.7).

#### 317.8.1 CRITERIA

Public safety emergency alerts may be issued to alert or warn the public about events including but not limited to:

- (a) Evacuation orders (including evacuation routes, shelter information, key information).
  - (b) Shelter-in-place guidance due to severe weather.
  - (c) Terrorist threats.
  - (d) HazMat incidents.
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317.8.2 PROCEDURE

Public safety emergency alerts should be activated by following the guidelines issued by the Office of Emergency Services (Gov. Code § 8593.7).